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ABSTRACT

The coexistence of wildlife with American agriculture is explored in this pamphlet. Studied is the importance and value of good soil and water conservation to conserve wildlife, relating it to the feeding and living habits of wildlife, economic and aesthetic values of wildlife, the growing of specific plants and provision of watering places for the survival of wildlife. The booklet serves as the script for a set of color slides and filmstrip produced by the Soil Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Each of the 58 frames is illustrated with accompanying narration next to the picture. (BL)

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Sharing Our Land with Wildlife

Narrative guide for color slide set and film strip C-177

SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

1. Some of the wildlife in the United States lives on public lands, including game refuges and sanctuaries.

2. But most of our birds and animals find their homes on privately owned land . . . on our farms and ranches.

3. On 60 percent of the land area of this country, wildlife coexists with American agriculture.

4. Most wild things ask little of the property owner. To survive they need only . . .

5. a place to hide, to nest . . .

6. . . . to raise their young . . .

7. . . . the protection that biologists call "cover."

8. Wild creatures also need food to eat, preferably food that is close to cover, so they can scurry back to safety.

9. Berries or fruit, like crabapple, attract wildlife . . .

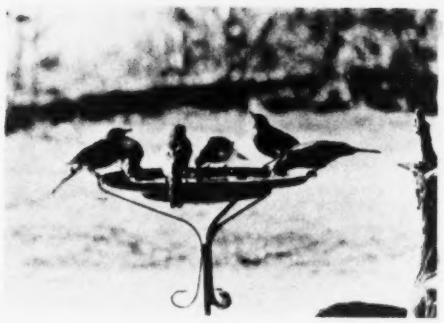
10. . . . as do nuts and seeds.

11. Wildlife also needs water, to drink or feed in or live in.

12. All this is little enough for the benefits they provide in destroying harmful insects, rodents, and weeds. A dove, for example, was found to have eaten 7,500 seeds of wood sorrel, a weed pest.

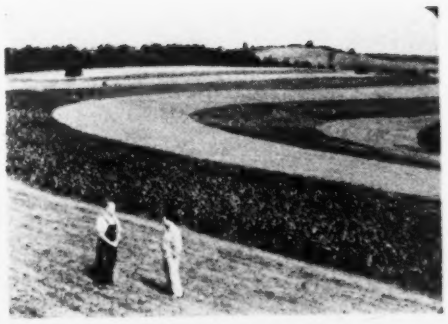
13. A bobwhite quail ate 1,700 weed seeds at one meal.

14. Even wild animals that are not always appreciated by the farmer, like the red fox, may help him more than he realizes by helping control rats and mice.



15. Beyond their economic value, of course, there is pleasure in just having wild things around.

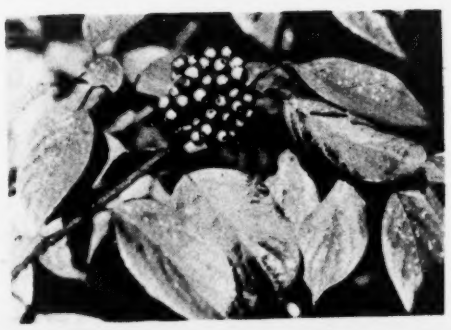
16. Farmers in all parts of the country know that good soil and water conservation also conserves wildlife.



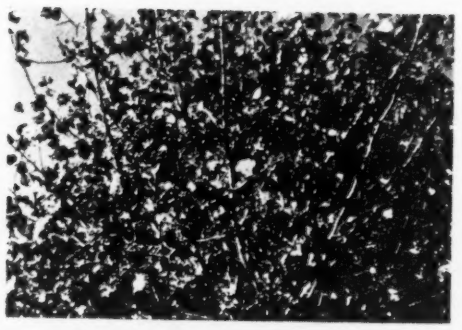
17. For example, growing strips of corn alternately with grasses or legumes can double the wildlife that would be present if one crop were planted.

18. Planting patches of food for wildlife also increases their numbers. This farmer is growing Japanese millet as duck food.

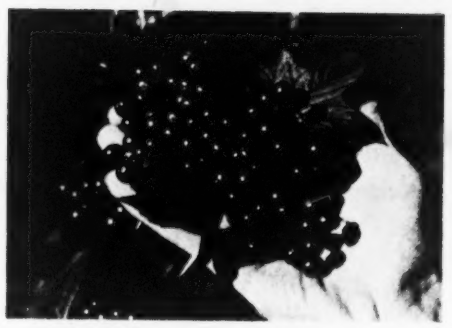
19. Among the many plants that attract birds and other wild creatures is autumn olive, a hardy shrub with an abundant yield of fruit. It grows well even in poor soil.



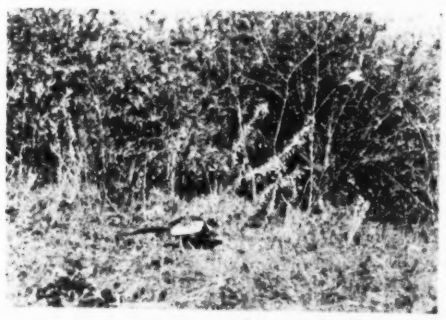
20. The blue fruit of silky dogwood is available to birds in the late summer and early fall.



21. Hawthorn fruits hang on during the winter, when other food is often in short supply.



22. Another plant with fruit in the winter is the American cranberry-bush, a species of viburnum.

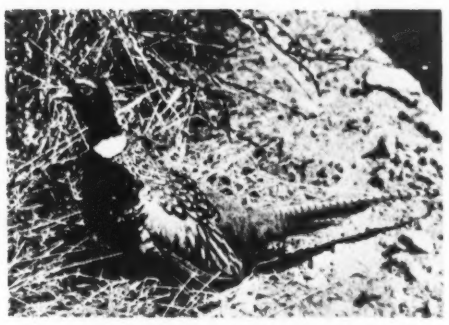


23. This woodland edge has been improved by the landowner with dogwood, viburnum, and crabapple. It now supports many more wild birds.

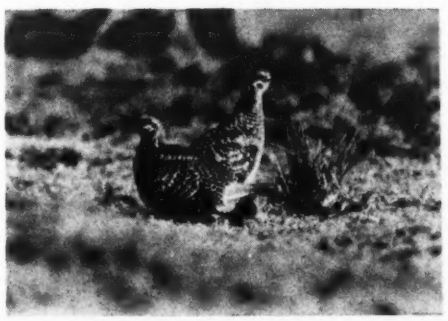
24. Farm hedges keep soil from washing downhill and provide nesting places for birds.

25. Edges of fields can be made to support much more wildlife by planting borders that provide food and cover.

26. In the Great Plains, windbreaks do a multiple conservation job. They slow down the wind, stop soil from blowing, keep crops from drying out . . .



27. . . . and often provide the only cover and food for birds over great stretches of treeless prairie.



28. With improved range management, the grasslands are coming back. And with them, so are several rare bird and mammal species.

29. In deer country, it is important for animals to have good cover which gives them access to fields for feeding.

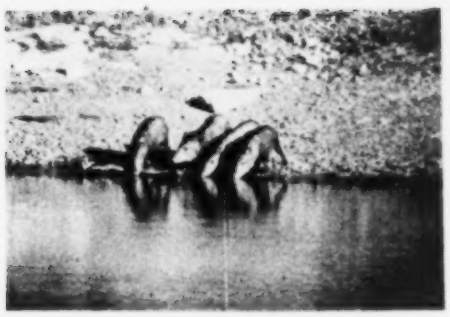
30. In cattle country, many ranchers are keeping this in mind and clearing brush on their ranches in strips, leaving cover in between for deer, turkey, and other wild game.

31. The right sort of farm woodlot also makes homes for many types of wildlife, including squirrels and deer.

32. Woods that have been overgrazed support very little wildlife.

33. On the other hand, woodland that includes a variety of shrubs and young trees is attractive to wildlife.

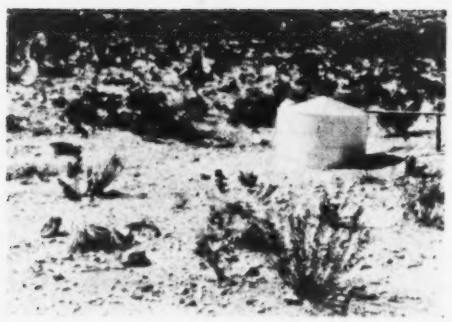
34. Trees with hollows are called "den trees." They provide shelter for raccoons and other creatures.



35. On livestock farms and ranches, ponds and other watering places may be used by wildlife, like the javelina (ha´-ve-li´-na), a wild pig native to the Southwest.

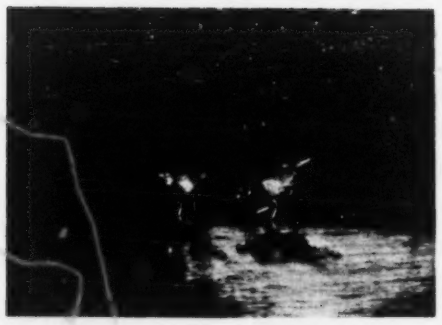
36. Ranchers in the west and southwest, where water is scarce, often provide sources of drinking water for wildlife, like this scaled (or blue) quail.

37. One efficient watering device, which is used by a variety of southwestern birds and animals, collects rainwater in this wide trough, and pipes it . . .



38. . . . to a storage tank. Wildlife can drink from the submerged basin at left, which fills automatically.

39. Where water is not so scarce, farm ponds and lakes attract a variety of wildlife, including ducks, geese, and other aquatic birds; raccoons, muskrats and mink.



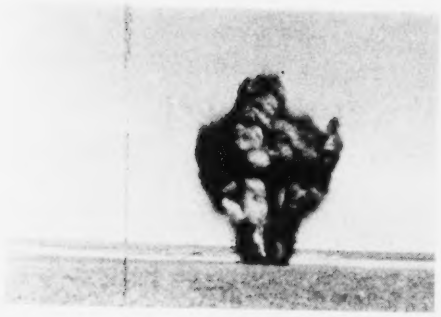
40. Even pheasant may drink at farm ponds.

41. Ducks often nest in grasses around a pond.

42. Some birds, like the Canada goose, get help from farmers -- who provide these nesting platforms in shallow ponds or marshes.

43. The Soil Conservation Service, through publications and direct technical assistance, helps landowners apply wildlife conservation practices on their farms and ranches.

44. Some farmers, it is true, have drained wetlands used by wild birds. But local conservation districts have persuaded many landowners to replace lost water acreage with manmade potholes for wildlife.



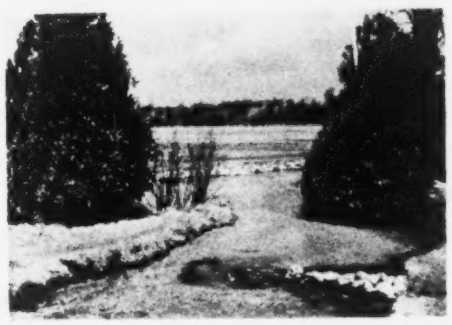
45. To make potholes or to improve existing ones, farmers blast shallow depressions.

46. The depressions fill in quickly, providing new places along major flyways where birds can feed and rest.

47. Other farmers use bulldozers to create new ponds, some with islands in the center where wildfowl can nest.

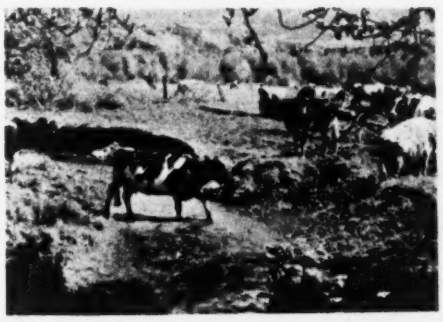
48. SCS has helped farmers and ranchers construct more than 1.7 million ponds on their property--ponds that water livestock, furnish water to put out fires, and provide homes for wildlife.

49. Farm ponds generally are stocked with fish like trout, bass and sunfish.



50. Soil and water conservation also promotes cleaner streams and better stream fishing.

51. A stream like this one, filled with sediment, shows why soil erosion is one of the chief enemies of fish and other wildlife.

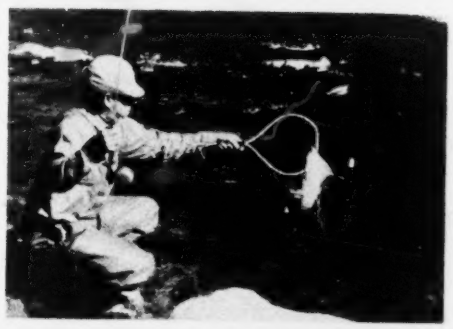


52. Much of this sediment comes from eroding streambanks.

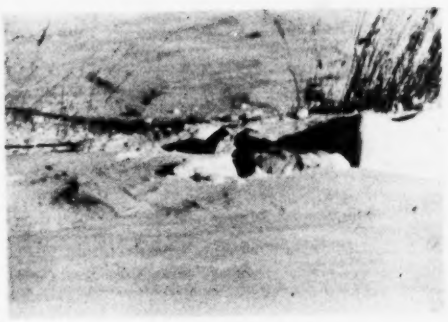
53. Sediment also moves into streams and rivers from unprotected farmland, like this hillside planted in row crops.

54. Erosion that produces sediment can be cut sharply by contour plowing and terraces, which hold the water when it rains.

55. Grassed waterways also prevent erosion. Grass slows down the runoff from a field, prevents gully washing, and filters out a great deal of sediment.



56. Erosion control on the uplands pays off for fishermen in clear, fast trout streams like this one.



57. Throughout America, we are sharing agricultural land with wildlife.

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58. Many of the same practices that conserve soil and water on our farms and ranches conserve wildlife, too.

Slide #35 courtesy of Al Brothers, wildlife specialist, Laredo, Texas.

Copies of this slide set can be purchased for $9.00 from Photography Division, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Order the filmstrip for $6.50 from Photo Lab., Inc., 3825 Georgia Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011.
September 1970